

2/15/17

Dear Appropriations Committee,

We are very concerned about the proposed FY 2018-19 Governor's Budget because it would:

- *Cut the Community Investment Act by 50% and divert funds from open space and natural resource protection, farmland preservation, affordable housing, historic preservation, and a safety net for dairy farmers.*
 - The State will not reach its goal of preserving 21% of its land as Open Space without adequate CIA funding and Open Space grants for Towns.
 - More agricultural land will be permanently lost to development and impact our ability to provide local food sources.
- *Continue the cuts from this year (FY 2017) which resulted in a 45% cut in seasonal workers, closure of 3 campgrounds, and reductions in services for the public across the state.*
 - *State Parks are critical for providing residents with healthy outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat. Our favorite park, Bigelow Hollow in Union is regionally important to northeast CT, since it provides access to hiking trails, boating, fishing and wildlife viewing.*
- *Eliminate the Council on Environmental Quality, a lean, effective environmental watchdog state agency.*
- *Reduce Department of Energy & Environmental Protection professionals by another 24 positions when DEEP has already lost over 200 positions over the past decade.*
 - *Now more than ever, we will be relying more heavily on our State and local agencies to protect our natural resources, since the new Trump administration is skeptical about climate change and will be loosening environmental regulations and threatening gains we have made at protecting our air, water and wildlife resources.*

We hope the Committee will take the following actions:

- 1) *Protect the CIA and restore it to 100% funding.*
- 2) *Support a dedicated, non-lapsing account where revenues generated by DEEP can be used to hire seasonal workers, maintain State Parks, and provide critical public services;*
- 3) *Support ideas such as the Passport to the Parks which generate NEW revenues to offset the proposed cuts.*

Sincerely,

Kathy Demers and Chris Demers,

Willington, CT